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Benjamin Shotwell House  
Happy Valley Lane  
Raritan Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-55

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12-METO.V.  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Benjamin Shotwell House  
Happy Valley Lane  
Raritan Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Owner: Herbert R. Runyon

Date of Erection: 1747-1750

Architect:

Builder: Benjamin Shotwell

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and one-half

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame  
construction, brick filled,  
shingles and siding

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

This house was built somewhere around 1750 by Benjamin Shotwell. It was left to his daughter Nancy Thornal. John Runyon bought the property from Lewis and Nancy Thornal in 1801. Five generations of the Runyon family have lived in the house - John, Ephraim R., Isaac S., Herbert R., and Gilbert. Herbert Runyon, the fourth generation, is the present owner.

The original section of this house consisted of a front and back room, a shed, a kitchen with stairs leading to an open chamber and two bedrooms, a milk room that opened from the kitchen and back room; this room was lower than the first floor, it had a brick floor with a stone shelf built around the sides. Originally, the beams in the ceiling were exposed, but in 1846 these were plastered over. Some additions have been made, but the character of the old colonial house has still been retained. In 1846 Ephraim Runyon added to it on the east side; the old shed kitchen was moved to the wagon house and is now used as a garage; two rooms were added downstairs and two upstairs, also a shed kitchen, a cellar was put under this section and an inside stairway was built to it. Isaac S., who died in 1868, added three bedrooms over the shed kitchen with a back stairway leading to them. The house had a Dutch oven; this was installed by Ephraim in 1846 and was taken out by Isaac in 1872. The present owner has made no changes other than the window on the east side of the kitchen and an extension on the front porch.

#### Bibliography:

Notes furnished by the present owner

Helen E. Holt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams  
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District Officer